



TECHNICAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE
Minutes of September 24, 2009
11:00 a.m., Greensboro, NC
Plaza Level Conference Room
Melvin Municipal Office Building

ATTENDANCE

Tyler Meyer	<i>GDOT / TCC Chair</i>	Hanna Cockburn	<i>Piedmont Triad RPO</i>
Lydia McIntyre	<i>GDOT / MPO</i>	Bill Marley	<i>FHWA</i>
Craig McKinney	<i>GDOT / MPO</i>	Mark Kirstner	<i>PART</i>
Chris Spencer	<i>GDOT Engineering</i>	George Linney	<i>GTA</i>
Bill Bruce	<i>Guilford County Planning</i>	Roger Bardsley	<i>Guilford County</i>
Brad Wall	<i>NCDOT, Division 7</i>		
Adam Fischer	<i>GDOT</i>		

Tyler Meyer called the meeting to order at 11:02 a.m.

Action Items

1. Approve Minutes of August 26, 2009

Hanna Cockburn moved for approval of the minutes, Mark Kirstner seconded. The board voted unanimously for the approval of the minutes of August 26, 2009 meeting.

2. Modify 2009-2015 Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program

Lydia McIntyre reviewed the modification to the 2009-2015 MTIP. The modifications are needed to include two additional stimulus projects. The projects are to upgrade lighting along US 29. The projects are new projects and are sponsored by the City and NCDOT. The city sponsored project will extend from I-40/I-85 Business to Phillips Avenue and the NCDOT project will extend from Phillips Avenue to just north of McKnight Mill Road. This amendment will go before the Board of Transportation next month.

Adam Fischer noted that the city and NCDOT have a joint agreement with Duke Energy to maintain the lights along the projects limits. Duke Energy no longer wants to maintain lights along freeways because it is costly and time consuming. The city worked out agreement with Duke Energy to leave the light poles, but the city will need to upgrade electrical lines. Stimulus funds were identified by NCDOT after previously approved stimulus projects came in under bid.

McIntyre noted the city sponsored project is currently included in the 25 ranked projects, but would be removed if approved by the Board of Transportation.

Adam Fischer moved for recommendation to the TAC, Hanna Cockburn seconded. Committee voted unanimously to approve the recommendation to the TAC.

Planning for the transportation future

Business / Potential Action Items

I. Recap of the New TIP Process

Tyler Meyer reviewed NCDOT's new TIP Process. NCDOT has adopted a new 5 Year Let List. The Let List is based on more conservative financial plan of action. The list is a part of larger process plan and includes maintenance, construction, and operation costs. The Let list a part of systematic approach to identifying projects for the next TIP. The 5 year let list is incorporated into the 2011-2017 TIP. Additional projects beyond that will be identified through a project evaluation process.

The new Strategic Prioritization Office of Transportation known as SPOT is instituting a new quantitative analysis. The analysis is looking at highway projects and focused on current data and includes points for MPO, RPO, and Division rankings. Non-highway projects will be reviewed by NCDOT modal divisions. The MPO will also submit rankings for non-highways projects. Today MPO staff will focus on the process the MPO developed to rank area highway projects and supplement the NCDOT process

2. Roadway Ranking for NCDOT Technical Evaluation

Tyler Meyer noted the MPO has developed prioritization process for evaluating projects. The process will provide additional data for the SPOT process as it only focuses on current needs and the MPO process focuses on future needs.

Lydia McIntyre explained the Roadway Ranking Evaluation process developed by the MPO. The list of projects to be evaluated was distributed during the last meeting. In addition, MPO staff emailed the draft criteria and a revised list. Revisions to list included the removal of R-2808B and R-2413. Noted the SPOT evaluation is based on current data and the MPO evaluation is based on future data which will supplement the SPOT evaluation.

McIntyre noted the single sheet shows the list of the 25 prioritized ranked projects. The SPOT evaluation will allow the MPO to submit more than 25 ranked projects, but only the first 25 will be evaluated by SPOT.

The MPO evaluation was based on three types of criteria and included needs, feasibility, and additional. The need criteria focused on congestion and safety and are quantifiable. The feasibility criteria are focused on environmental impacts, project status, funding eligibility and are qualitative. The additional criteria awards points for multimodal features, local funding availability, or projects documented in a land use document.

McIntyre reviewed the process steps for developing the evaluation ranking process. The criterion was developed by reviewing other MPO's criteria, evaluating the MPO's needs, and using evaluation criteria from past MPO studies. Noted the Needs Criteria includes data on reducing congestion, identifying accidents, and is a priority project for the MPO. The congestion data was calculated from the 2035 Triad Travel Demand Model and synchro analysis. The two different applications were used because the projects include roadway segments, intersections, and grade separations. The maximum number of points awarded for the top performing projects is also listed for each criterion.

The feasibility criterion is qualitative and is based on staff's past project history and knowledge. The first criteria focus on impacts to the natural environment. This criterion is relating to the type of environmental document that will be required for the project. The more difficult the document the less points the project receives. The next criterion is the status of projects and awards points based on its current status. The further along the project is in the project development process, the more points awarded. Points are also awarded based on the project's source of funding and funding availability. For example, the Urban Loop funding is less flexible and somewhat limited.

The last category for the criteria is additional criteria. This criteria awards point for intermodal connectivity, local share availability, conformance to land use plans, and multimodal accommodations.

McIntyre noted some of the criteria do overlap NCDOT's criteria and an example would be Multi-modalism.

McIntyre referenced the package labeled 'Project Ranking Point Distribution' and directed TCC member's attention back to the evaluation process slide. The projects listed on the ranked list were identified by reviewing the 5 Year Let List, the LRTP, and the current 2009-2015 TIP. The next step included collecting data from the travel demand model and from NCDOT TEAAS database. The safety data collected included severity index and crash rate. Various scenarios were evaluated and are included in the package. The scenarios included ranking the projects based on all the criteria, only congestion, only safety, and a combination of the criteria. Based on staff review it was determined the most reasonable ranking was based on evaluating all the criteria.

The very last page of the package includes the urban loop ranking. The urban loop ranking is separate because NCDOT is developing a separate process for the loops.

McIntyre reviewed an example of how a project was ranked and used the Cone Boulevard Extension. It did very well in the congestion category. The vehicle hours delay is based on model output. The 2035 E+C model was used as a baseline and then each project was added into the model to see how much the vehicle hours of delay were reduced. In the case of Cone Boulevard Extension it was reduced by 3.36%. The Extension performed the best for this criterion and therefore became the baseline to evaluate the other projects against and resulted in a relative percentile. The percentile calculation was used to award the points. The Extension was awarded 3 points because its percentile was 100%.

Adam Fischer inquired in the vehicle hours of delay was only for the eastside of Greensboro. McIntyre noted it was actually for the entire model or system wide. Meyer noted East Cone Boulevard Extension did so well because of the lack of east – west corridors on the eastside of Greensboro.

Fischer also inquired if this was current or future. McIntyre noted it was based on the future 2035 travel demand model.

Bill Bruce inquired about two other projects receiving a maximum of 3 points for the same criteria along with East Cone Boulevard. McIntyre noted the other two projects were a grade separation and an intersection improvement. These projects evaluated separately and therefore received the maximum points for those two categories.

The safety composite was based the safety index and the number of crashes divided by the distance. The composite is 50% severity index and 50% crash rate. The relative percentile calculation was made using the best performing project as a base. In the case of the Extension no accidents were identified as it is a future project on new location.

The policy priority awards points for projects that have been identified by the MPO as a priority like US 70 or the Urban Loop. The Extension had not been identified so it was not awarded any points. The environmental document based on staff knowledge was identified for the Extension as Environmental Assessment and therefore was awarded 2 points. The intermodal connectivity is based on if it provides access to the airport, which would be no for the Extension. The land use conformance is based on if it is mentioned in a land use plan and the Extension is mentioned in the Greensboro's 2025 Comprehensive Plan. The multi-modalism awards points to projects that accommodate modes other than cars.

Fischer inquired about NCDOT using future data and not just current data. McIntyre noted NCDOT is only using current and do not have the ability to evaluated projects across the state based on future data. Meyer noted this comment was passed along to them regarding using future data.

McIntyre noted the Urban Loop ranking. It was noted the loops were also entered into the model as individual segments. The Eastern Loop would have performed better if the Northern Loop was also evaluated with it.

McIntyre noted the MPO is also evaluated the non-highway projects which will need to be submitted to SPOT and ranked.

Hanna Cockburn moved to recommend the ranked list of 25 projects as shown on 'Project Ranking Point Distribution' to the TAC, Roger Bardsley seconded. Committee voted unanimously to approve the recommendation to the TAC.

3. Priority Needs List Review

Tyler Meyer noted the Priority Needs List relates to the last item, but goes beyond it. The list offers value that has been developed every year for communicating to NCDOT and public. The list includes multi-modal projects and differentiates roadway projects based on types and funding sources. The list also offers opportunity for partnerships and ability to identify new needs taking into account resource constraints.

Meyer stated the loops are being evaluated separately and will know more about the process in the spring. The Urban Loops include Eastern, Western, and Northern. The loops were approved in this order previously by the TAC. R-2413, US 220/ NC 68 Connector is partially funded, but want to ensure funding is available for post year construction. But the project is currently shown on the 5 Year Let List, so may not need to be on the Priority Needs List. The other interstate priority is I-73 Connector to provide a connection from US 220/ NC 68 Connector to Urban Loop and the requests is for an environmental document.

The roadway system priorities reflect projects that are currently in TIP but are unfunded and are not reflected on the 5 year let list. The list reflects the current status of the projects.

R-2612 (US 421 at Neelley Road) requests funding for right-of-way and construction. R-4707 (US 29 interchange at Reedy Fork) document will be complete early winter and funding is being requested for construction. The project will replace and widen deficit bridge. U-2581/ R-2910 (US 70) request is for the start of an environmental document. US 29 safety upgrade project is based on a study done 8 years ago on a strategic corridor route. The project would close 3 ramps and upgrade existing ramps. Intersection improvements are city bond projects and currently have funding. If the intersections receive NCDOT funding this would allow bond money to go further.

The rail projects are short term projects. Some of the projects are in connection with the Eastern Guilford Grade Separation Study. NCDOT has interest in doing study which may include Franklin Boulevard. Craig noted Rail Division trying to obtain stimulus funding to double tracking between Greensboro and McCleansville. Hilltop grade separation and Aycock railroad underpass upgrade were included in the MPO project evaluation.

Current MPO studies have identified the need for future projects. The Airport Area Study is currently ongoing and may result in new priorities such as Sandy Ridge Road. MPO project evaluation for East Cone Boulevard Extension calls attention for the need of a project in future.

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Priorities include sidewalks that make connections to transit, parks, and residential areas. Battleground Rail Trail Phase II is contingent upon the abandonment of the rail line. Other projects include completing sections of the Downtown Greenway, resurfacing the Bicentennial Trail, reconstructing portions Latham Park Greenway and North Carolina Railroad underpass at Glenwood Avenue at UNC-G.

The next projects focus on Public Transportation Priorities. The priorities focus on the next year 2 years for GTA. Meyer noted PART should think about the projects they may want to add to the list. The list is for review and the MPO will present next month for approval.

Fischer inquired about how the public transportation projects will be handled in SPOT.

Meyer noted the projects will be entered into SPOT in ranked priority and the NCDOT modal divisions will review the projects further. SPOT is still an evolving process that will need to address these types of items in the future.

Chris Spencer inquired about the Aycock underpass project and noted the feasibility study stated improvements would also need to be done to Tate Street, along with Aycock Street.

4. Proposed CMAQ Projects

Tyler Meyer reviewed the draft recommendations for CMAQ projects. NCDOT has a process that sub allocates funds to MPOs and RPOs. The amount of funding allocated is based on severity of air quality issues. A substantial amount of funding is held back for state projects.

This program was used for GTA's HEAT service a few years ago. This is the 2nd round of CMAQ funding and totals \$8.4 million. The program funds can only be used for certain projects and include public transit projects. The funds can be used for new starts, operational service for a three year period. Also can be used for purchasing buses if can show air quality benefits. Bike and sidewalk projects are also eligible, but usually do not show a huge air quality benefits. These types of projects show more of a benefit if connected with transit. NCDOT's preference is for projects that show higher levels of air quality benefits. A technical analysis is required for each project to show the air quality impact.

MPO staff has identified 3 sets of priority projects that could be implemented in the short term. GTA did a plan last year regarding short range service plan which included public input. MPO staff recommends GTA's service priorities for CMAQ funding.

Meyer reviewed the first set of priorities. Priority 1 is to covert Route 15 (Yanceyville Street) from 1 hour frequency to 30 minute frequency. Priority 2 is to split the Randleman Road / Elm-Eugene route into two separate routes. This route is one of GTA's busiest routes and it is expected that ridership would increase by 140,000 annually. Priority 3 is to enhance Sunday service. The enhancement would maintain the 15 weekly routes instead of collapsing down to seven routes on Sunday. It is expected that ridership would increase by 68,000 annually. The new services would require 3 new buses; GTA already has an order in for them from a previously approved grant. Therefore the CMAQ funding would only cover operational costs. The total cost for these three projects is approximately \$2.9 million in federal funds.

Meyer reviewed the second set of priorities for GTA projects. Priority 4 is implementing a new service for Battleground Avenue Connector. It is expected to generate 39,000 riders annually. Priority 5 is implementing a new service for North Elm Street Connector and is expected to generate 39,000 riders annually. Priority 6 is implementing a new service for West Market Street Connector, which is expected to generate 33,000 riders annually. 3 buses would be needed for these new services. The total cost for these new services and bus purchases is \$3.8 million in federal funds.

The last set of priorities includes transit oriented sidewalk projects under TIP project EL-5101. These sidewalks could be ready to go in 2012 and are currently in design or right now. The recommendation is completing sections of sidewalk on Battleground Avenue from Old Battleground Avenue to Benjamin Parkway and totals 2.7 miles. The next recommendation is East Cone Boulevard from US 29 to St. Regis and GTA does travel on a portion of the road and totals 2.4 miles. West Friendly from Francis King to West Market Street is also recommended. McConnell Road from Willow Street to English Street is the

last recommendation to close a gap of .3 miles. This would be a total of 7.6 miles of sidewalks for a total cost of \$1.3 million in federal funds.

The total package for the three set of priorities is just under the available amount of CMAQ funding. The projects may have to be staggered out over time. NCDOT is flexible in working with agencies that are able to deliver projects in short term.

Mark Kirstner requested a connector from New Garden Road up Battleground Avenue to Old Battleground Park.

Meyer noted projects are still under review and requested feedback. Staff will continue to work with NCDOT on finalizing the funding level.

Hannah Cockburn inquired if confident in doing 7 miles of sidewalk in 2012.

Meyer responded very likely, but could possibly spill over into 2013.

5. STP-DA Program Update

Tyler Meyer reviewed the STP-DA program for the upcoming TIP. Federal funding allocated directly to the MPO. Staff is working on determining available balances. A big rescission is pending based on language in SAFETEA-LU at the end of this month which will result in reduced federal dollars. The impact nationally would be a reduction of \$8.7 billion. North Carolina would see a reduction of \$250 million dollars. The Greensboro MPO would see a reduction of \$1.2 million which would also impact CMAQ funding.

Meyer believes the 5 Year Let list was developed with the understanding the rescission was pending. The House or Senate has made an amendment, but did not address rescission. But the White House supports removing the verbiage regarding the rescission. Staff will give an update during the next MPO meeting.

6. TIP Next Steps

Tyler Meyer noted at the next meeting staff will bring back the Priority Needs List and CMAQ recommendation for approval. Staff will also present ranked transit, bicycle, and pedestrian projects.

The information will be submitted to the SPOT process and NCDOT will do their evaluation. Statewide priority list is expected January 2010 and comprehensive report on funding scenarios in the summer 2010 and final adoption in July 2011.

7. Transportation Project Update

The Battleground Rail Trail is currently under construction and will be done this fall. Construction is starting on the 2nd phase of underpass at Cone Boulevard. City Council will be asked to approve a change order for the project at October meeting.

Work on GTA's new facility continues. George Linney noted the ground breaking will be on November 19th at 2pm.

Stimulus funding has been approved for the Bicentennial Trail and Trail head in Summerfield. Craig McKinney noted approval for Elm-Eugene and Lake Jeanette projects is expected in early October and construction will start in January or February. Sidewalk project approval or review has been delayed.

8. MPO Strategic Topics

Meyer noted the MPO hired a new Planner, named Drew Spiliotis and he will start October 1st.

Meyer also congratulated Adam Fischer on being hired as the new GDOT Director.

Fischer would like Meyer to continue in the role of TCC Chair and noted he does a good job.

Other Items

1. NCDOT Update

Brad Wall distributed NCDOT's project update information.

2. TCC Member Reports

McKinney noted NCDOT conducted a workshop for R-2309 for US 220. Meeting included meeting with council and public. The meeting was very well attended and citizens were primarily concerned about the divided facility cross-section.

Chris Spencer noted had 2nd Horse Pen Creek Road public meeting. Similar comments from public on divided facility. Anticipated using culvert, but now will construct bridge for environmental reasons. The bridge will also better suit the Bicentennial crossing.

McKinney noted couple of inquiries about the Western Urban Loop at the Horse Pen Creek Road.

Hanna Cockburn noted citizens inquired about roadway improvement to the Lee Street/ High Point Road corridor at the Planning Department's meeting on land use. Stated Carol Carter would like the next meeting be cooperative with Engineering's staff.

Adam Fischer noted the first Lee Street/ High Point Road Feasibility Study public meeting was conducting earlier and a 2nd meeting will be in November.

Lydia McIntyre noted the MPO meeting in October and the meeting date will be rescheduled to October 22nd or 26th. Will send out meeting notice.

Cockburn noted the North Carolina APA conference is next week in Greensboro and she will be conducting a bike ride on the Battleground Trail on the existing section.

3. Wrap-Up

Meyer adjourned the meeting at 12:23pm.